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'Background' Turns Up Slyly

Not Dulles' Fault, But Splat!

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WASHINGTON — President Kennedy's humiliation in the Cuban invasion fiasco has produced the first signs of slyness in the White House operation.

Lahey

There have been unmistakable signs of brainwashing of newspapermen in recent days, by high White House officials, wherein the views of the President are offered in print without any hint of attribution to the officials who transmit them.

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ALL OF the White House stories based apparently on "background briefing" in the past several days have had one common thread.

They leave a few dead cats on the doorstep of Allen Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and then hurriedly point out that the President does not want to blame Dulles for the Cuban invasion fiasco.

Pierre Salinger, the President's press secretary, said Monday in answer to a question that he knew nothing of any "background briefings" that had been given at the White House.

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DESPITE Salinger's profession of ignorance, it was known beyond doubt that on Saturday, Theodore C. Sorenson, the President's special counsel, planted the Kennedy's views in the Cuban crisis with a group of newspapermen.

The "background briefing," ostensibly intended as a means of improving journalistic understanding, is an old Washington institution.

It comes to public notice on rare occasions when the "background briefing" technique is used for brainwashing purposes, to get the views of responsible officials made public without attribution. On more than one occasion, this technique has been used to victimize journalists.

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THIS IS possible because a reporter enters a "background briefing" with the knowledge that he cannot publicly attribute the views expressed to him.

If it later develops that the matter fed to newspapermen under these conditions has perpetrated an injustice, the newspaperman is bound not to confess that he has been used for meretricious purposes.

The stories that have emitted from the White House in the past several days, carrying President Kennedy's views without attributing them to him or any other source, are the first known instance where the Kennedy administration has resorted to this seedy device of public relations.

A Cat

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